



Youth in the Great Outdoors

Profile of STEP student Jason Chow



A Day in the Life

Jason Chow (left) can credit his Service experience to a tiny, red shrimp found nowhere else in the world. A biology major at the University of Hawaii, Jason joined the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office through the Student Temporary

Employment Program (STEP).

Creating Conservation Professionals

The Service hires young adults aged 15-25 in temporary positions as part of the agency's Connecting People With Nature Program. Since 2009 the Pacific Region Fishery Resources program has more than doubled the number of temporary youth hires in response to a challenge by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to engage, educate, and employ the next generation of conservation professionals as part of the Department of the Interior's Youth and the Great Outdoors Initiative.

Jason helped the Service's Candidate Conservation program restore anchialine pools for native shrimp located on the Kalaeloa Unit of the Pearl Harbor National Wildlife Refuge. Jason, assisted by fellow STEP student Kimo Short, created four learning stations encompassing all aspects of restoring the native dry coastal ecosystem. He then taught area Kapolei High School students how to guide other students visiting the Refuge through the stations, showcasing native Hawaiian cultural practices. "It is my vision that these six students can now become the

teachers and pass down their knowledge to underclassmen," Jason shares.

In the Field

Jason has also participated in Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership-led aquatic restoration efforts such as translocating rare damselflies and restoring fish passage. Though nearshore marine fisheries have always been Jason's passion, his work to protect one, tiny red shrimp, has now made it possible to envision a future Service career.



Jason (second from left) speaking to local students about habitat restoration (Credit: USFWS)

Career Pathways

The Pacific Region Fishery Resources program is proud to provide pathways to explore natural resources careers for promising young adults and aspiring conservationists like Jason. "I now think of conservation work as divided into land and sea, but as one unit, one large ecosystem. I hope to continue working in fisheries conservation after I graduate and am thankful to have gained many invaluable experiences working here."



Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office

300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088
Honolulu, HI 96850
808/792-9400
<http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands>